



MONTANA DNRC Conversation

A Newsletter of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation • Director Bud Clinch
Winter 2005

— MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR —

With the next legislative session only a week or so away we are sure to be engaged heavily, both in presenting department-initiated legislation and in reacting to other proposed legislation. From a department standpoint, we have about a dozen pieces of legislation to advance.

The Conservation and Resource Development Division has three specific bills that address financing issues. One allows local government's easier access to the DNRC public financing process. Another allows the wastewater and drinking water revolving fund participants to borrow for short-term needs and also to adjust the loan principal based on hardship. The third bill is to add flexibility for short-term financing of the regional water systems.

The Water Resources Division has four bill proposals. One is to extend the sunset on the in stream-flow-leasing provision in the current law. A second proposal is to do general cleanup in the current Water Use Act to clarify the definition of "appropriate" public notice procedures, information submitted in objections, and other administrative procedures. A third proposal is to amend the existing controlled groundwater statute to allow for two 2-year extensions. The fourth is to permanently attach the Flathead Basin Commission to the Water Resources Division.



Director Bud Clinch

The Trust Land Management Division has five bill proposals affecting state land management. The first is to clarify authority for the Board of Land Commissioners to flexibly fashion land conveyances, which is a fancy way of saying being able to sell a variety of types of easements, such as subdivision or development rights, while protecting historical and conventional uses of the land. Second is a request for authority to market processed logs from state lands rather than always selling standing timber. Another proposal seeks authority to enter into 99-year leases for "carbon sequestration" and 25-year leases for timber management. A fourth and non-controversial proposal will seek author-

ity to administratively charge non-compliant lessees for the costs of weed management. The final piece of DNRC legislation proposed will clarify that the term "cumulative impacts," as utilized in Montana Environmental Policy Act refers only to actions of a state agency.

As if this isn't enough to keep the DNRC legislative team hopping, the 150 legislators are sure to introduce dozens of other pieces aimed at improving water law, land management, forestry practices, grazing, or who knows what.

As I depart DNRC, I want to thank each of you for your hard work, dedication, and friendship. It has been a pleasure working with you. I wish each of you a wonderful 2005.

—DNRC INITIAL ATTACK GETS A BIG “LIFT”—

Planning for the future, the Montana DNRC acquired two Huey UH1H helicopters from the Federal Excess Property Program (FEPP) in 2002. The helicopters were previously used by the Pennsylvania National Guard, but had been pulled from military service and available to DNRC through the FEPP. Today, one of those two is now the pride of the DNRC's aviation fleet, adding an additional platform with which to initial attack wildland fires, bringing our total number of Huey platforms to four.

DNRC Chief Pilot Chuck Brenton said that DNRC's Aviation Program acquired the helicopters with an eye toward developing a fourth UH1H eventually. That time came sooner than expected, according to Brenton, as earlier this year Bud Clinch, director of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, gave Brenton the go-ahead to begin developing a new helicopter.

On June 2, the DNRC aviation crew got to work stripping everything out of the helicopter selected to be the new DNRC platform, soon to be dubbed 87M as its radio call letters would soon indicate on the tail boom. When finished, the crews had nothing but a shell left of what was formerly a helicopter. Then the long, tenuous process of rebuilding began. Using parts taken from other FEPP helicopters, specifically Cobras helicopters also picked up by DNRC, and a few new parts, the empty shell was brought back to life. On July 30th, approximately 60 days after the rebuild began, 87M rolled out onto the runway at the DNRC Aviation Hangar in Helena.

Brenton said the turn-around on this project was amazing. "In the past it's taken us a full winter, September to June, to develop a helicopter." Brenton pointed out that the success of this project reflects the dedication of every employee in the Aviation Section. "These guys worked seven days a week until the project was completed," Brenton explained. "Without their dedication, it wouldn't have happened." Every team member's contribution was

critical, either in the actual hands-on rebuilding or through taking on extra duties. Ed Martin, DNRC's aircraft inspector, and mechanics Ed Virostko and Nick Keilman did most of the development work. Tal Williams, the department's maintenance test pilot, provided the test flight data. Aviation contractors Garlick Helicopter (Hamilton) and Rocky Mountain Avionics (Kalispell) provided technical assistance.

What makes this helicopter so special, according to Brenton, are the modifications. "This helicopter is not like the other three platforms we have, in that this is the helicopter we've always wanted." Over the years, the aviation crews have kept a detailed log of the modifica-

tions and changes that they'd wanted to see made to the helicopters if time and money allowed. According to Brenton, all those modifications and changes were incorporated into 87M. Some of the new changes include the running gear, engine, transmission, and driveline from a Cobra helicopter,

as parts from the Cobra helicopter and Huey helicopter are interchangeable. Additionally, other on-board gadgets such as digital altimeters (gauge for determining how close the ground is) and on-board air-conditioning, all pieces and parts from the Cobra platforms, are part of this new helicopter. One of the most impressive items of the helicopter is the engine, which is also a Cobra engine. A more powerful engine than the standard Huey turbine engine which is standard in the other DNRC helicopters, with its new home in 87M, the result is the most powerful helicopter in DNRC's fleet. To give you an example of how powerful, the other three Huey's in use by DNRC each carry a 240-gallon water bucket when working fires; the new bird will utilize a 324-gallons bucket. "That extra 84-gallons could make a real difference when attempting to douse a fire that wants to get away," Brenton explained.

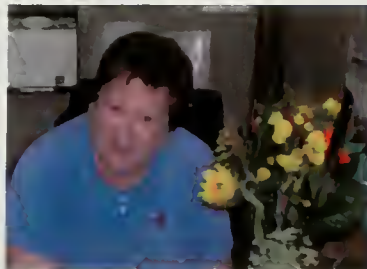


DNRC's Huey UH1H

Big Lift . . . continued on page 10

— RETIREMENTS —

Brenda Elwell



Brenda worked in the Governor's Office from April 1976 to January 1983, at which time she came to work for DNRC as a statistical technician in the Oil and Gas Conservation Division. In February 1996, the Trust Land Management Division hired her as an accounting technician, the position she held until her retirement on November 12. She says (jokingly) that she gave up a career in song and dance to work for DNRC! She plans on doing some remodeling in her home and taking long walks with her dog and camera; she also likes to sketch.

Penny Smith

Penny Smith began working for Montana state government in 1994 and started with DNRC on March 16, 1998. She provided administrative support in CSD's Information Technology Bureau, entering data from oil and gas production reports. She retired in September 2004 to relax, travel, and work on a variety of projects at home.

Jeri Ann Logan

Jeri Ann Logan has retired from DNRC after 30 years of service. Jeri Ann began working within Centralized Services Division in August of 1974. She was instrumental throughout her career in payroll, workers' compensation, recruitment, and benefits services. Jeri Ann was a true advocate of employees. She retires to spend more time on her small animal farm at Canyon Creek. She enjoyed the many working relationships she established over the years.

Carol Massman



Carole Massman started working for DNRC on October 3, 1972. Her career as a speechwriter, technical writer, and editor consisted of three, roughly equal (10-year) time periods as (1) a member of the Director's Special Staff Unit, (2) chief of the Publications Bureau, and, (3) most recently, supervisor of the Information Services Section. She retired on November 12 and hopes to travel, take some classes, and perhaps do volunteer or part-time work.

— DNRC HELITACK CREW SAVES KITTEN —

Fires are a destructive force in nature, taking with them trees, landscape and the lives of hundreds of wild and domestic animals each year. However, this was not the case for a kitten during one of this past summer's fires near Miles City. Thanks to some fast thinking and good-heartedness, the little kitten's life was spared the wrath that fire brings.

The crew of DNRC Helitack Platform 95M (helicopter), out of the Central Land Office (Helena) was dispatched to the Graveyard Creek Fire near the middle of July to provide air support. As such, the crew did a reconnaissance flight of the fire before landing at the staging area/helibase to begin operations.

Upon landing, Helicopter Manager Chris Dargan and Crew Member Neil Kunz went right to work hooking up the water bucket to the platform and getting pilot Chuck Brenton to work dousing the flames. Once Brenton was airborne, Dargan and Kunz began setting up operations at the helibase for their platform.

As the two set to work, Dargan was distracted by what sounded like a cat in distress. He began asking around, inquiring of another helitack crew already on the scene. In his investigation, he discovered that no one had found the cat nor attempted to find what the cat was doing or why it was crying. Not satisfied, Dargan did a rapid search and found, what turned out to be a kitten, perched precariously upon the axle of a low-boy trailer, brought into the staging area with a bulldozer on it for fighting the fire.

Dargan quickly realized that the kitten was injured, as its left front foot was nearly all but missing. Dargan gathered up the kitten and began to tend to its wounds and provided it with a bit of TLC, as best he could.

Shortly afterward, Miles City Star newspaper photographer Steve Allison appeared on the scene to photograph the fire and its activities. Dargan, knowing the kitten

needed immediate help, asked Allison if he would be so kind as to take the kitten into the Miles City Humane Society. Allison obliged and Dargan handed the battered kitten to Allison in all that was available, an old fire helmet, for transport. Then, Dargan went about fighting the fire.



Ember at the Eastern Montana Veterinary Clinic

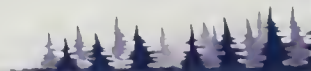
According to Allison, he brought the kitten back with him to Miles City and the Eastern Montana Veterinary Clinic, where Jean Lindley, the attending vet, went right to work caring for the kitten. The next morning, Lindley removed the kitten's front left leg as it had sustained too much damage and could not be saved. The kitten recovered quickly and spent several days at Allison's home recuperating. Approximately a week later, the Star ran a picture of the kitten in their Adopt-A-Pet section of the paper and there were over twenty

people willing to adopt the young kitten, two of which were Deb Barela from the Central Land Office as well as Dargan himself.

As of this printing, the kitten is doing fine and is in a super home with kids that care for the kitten. Her name is Ember.

As a reader, you may be wondering, "How did that kitten get all the way out there?" According to Dargan, the only way she could have gotten out there would have been riding on the axle of that trailer, from wherever that trailer had been parked before being dispatched to the fire. Unbelievable as it may seem, it is the only logical explanation in light of the condition of that kitten's left foot, it was injured too greatly for it to have walked there.

This story would not be possible if it weren't for the good hearts of a few folks. However, it's Chris Dargan that we tip our hat to in this edition of DNRConversation. Despite all that was going on around him, he saved a life that otherwise had been disregarded. Let us all be so lucky.....to have the courage and heart to do the right thing! Thanks Chris!



DOCUMENT IMAGING GAINS MOMENTUM IN DNRC

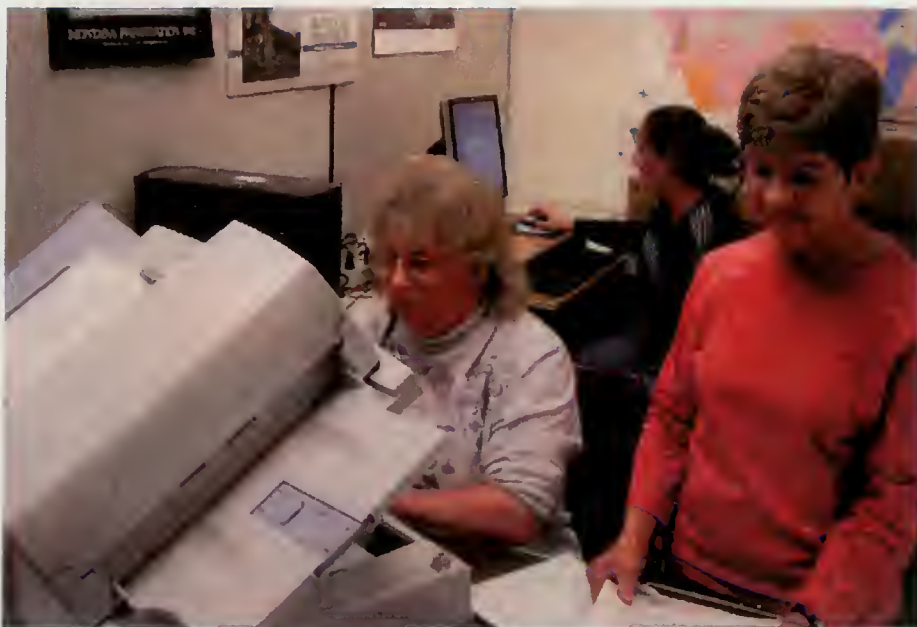
Document imaging is the process of taking paper documents, converting them to an electronic picture through the use of a scanner, and making them accessible for viewing and printing by computer.

The feasibility of performing these duties on a timely basis has improved dramatically due to great advancements made with scanners in recent years.

Most of us are most familiar with the flatbed scanners that can be purchased for less than \$100. Using that type of scanner for document imaging would be a monumental task. The new scanners, which cost over \$5,000, will automatically feed and scan double-sided documents at an amazing rate of more than 50 pages per minute.

The Water Resources Division, Trust Land Management Division, and Oil and Gas Conservation Division have already taken the leap into the document-imaging world. Each division has purchased a high-speed scanner. They are each in varying stages of testing and production.

The primary focus in the Water Resources Division is in the area of water right records. An estimated count of in excess of six million documents needs to be scanned. Once this project is complete, anyone will be able to view and print a scan of the original documents for a water right quickly and easily. The Department of Administration has recently signed an agreement with the Water Rights Bureau to make document scanning a pilot project. As a result, the Water Rights Bureau will be able to save significant initial setup costs in exchange for promoting the benefits of document scanning. To gain familiarity with the imaging process, the water resource survey books were scanned first and are available on the Internet. The new



WRD imaging in progress with (left to right) Yvonne Paddock, Anne Lowney, and Sharon Borer.

appropriations hearings orders have also been scanned and are now available on the Internet.

The Trust Land Management Division's Agriculture & Grazing Bureau is currently scanning the new 2004 trust land leases. The Minerals Management Bureau is scanning the newest leases and then going

backwards from the most recent to the oldest. The Real Estate Management Bureau is beginning the process of scanning the original acquisition deeds of non trust lands that are owned by various agencies, i.e., the state prison, youth correctional facilities, state hospital, treatment facilities, National Guard armories, reservoirs and irrigation projects, universities, etc. Ultimately, all of Montana's U.S. patents, general land ownership maps, trust land control cards, oil & gas control cards, Montana patents, and other valuable documentation will be stored electronically for easy access. Jeff Dobb, information system specialist with DNRC's Centralized Services Division, Information Technology Bureau, has written an interface linking the agriculture and grazing leases, minerals leases and assignments, and special use leases to the Trust Land Management System (TLMS). The interface allows the lease documents to be viewed and printed at any DNRC office, thus replacing the manual procedure of faxing leases, as reference, to the field offices.

The Oil and Gas Conservation Division is in the process of scanning board orders so that they can also be accessed in the Oil and Gas Database System. An estimated 12,000 to 15,000 pages of board orders are to be scanned into the system. The images will also be available through the division's website.

THE THREE R's of CONSERVATION



Photo by Jack Zanto

DNRC recycling guru Bob Levitan (on right) assists Tracy Potvin - General Services (DOA) with periodic collection.

Conservation can take on any number of meanings and does, to each of us. However, as a natural resource agency, we have a different understanding of and appreciation for the word "conservation" as it relates to our natural resources here in Montana, especially since our mission is to help preserve and protect those natural resources. In addition to utilizing our resources and managing them, we are also tasked with conserving them.

One of the easiest and most effective ways to accomplish that is through recycling. Recycling is not new to this agency; however, it may surprise you how much recycling does go on in DNRC.

The Integrated Waste Management Act passed by the Montana Legislature in 1991 requires state agencies and

employees to reduce the volume of solid waste prior to disposal or incineration through reuse, recycling, and reduction, commonly referred to as the "Three R's". And, there is no DNRC building more in tune with that concept than the DNRC headquarters (USF&G Building) in Helena.

Rather than calling it by a fancy conservation name, most folks just call it the recycling program. The USF&G Building has had an aggressive recycling system in place since 1996. Currently the program is under the watchful eye of DNRC Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission employee, Bob Levitan. Bob ensures that the USF&G recycling program stays on-track and stays in compliance.

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In Helena, the entire state agency recycling program has collected over 3,086 tons of material since its inception. This translates into more than 150 semi truck-loads of office products and by-products that have not ended up in our landfills. DNRC alone has contributed over 34 tons of paper, newsprint and cardboard since 1996.

According to Levitan, it doesn't take that much time to periodically gather up the unused paper and cardboard from an office. For example, non-payday Wednesdays are recycling days at the DNRC headquarters building. Bins (provided by General Services Division of the Montana Dept. of Administration) full of paper, cardboard boxes and newspapers are all taken out to the curb, where they are picked up by an employee of that division. These materials are then hauled to the local Pacific Steel and Recycling Yard. DNRC does not get any revenues from these materials, but the State of Montana does receive the revenues generated from its recycling efforts. Those funds are then utilized to pay for the recycling program, its employees, and the necessary equipment to keep the recycling program on its feet.

But paper is only one product that is recycled in this agency. Another readily thought of recyclable item is aluminum cans. At the DNRC Headquarters building, there are numerous recycling bins for cans. This is because DNRC employees return the cans separately and the money generated from the recycling is used for the Employee Fund. The fund helps to pay for holiday activities and other parties, such as the DNRC Halloween potluck, throughout the year as well as funding assorted charitable causes, like providing a Thanksgiving dinner to a needy family in the Helena area.

What happens to all the wasted paper from the hundreds of maps, banners, and signs that we make every year? At the headquarters building it, too, gets recycled, but not in the same fashion as the other types of paper. Instead, the graphic designers take the scraps, trimmings of unused paper, paper with mistakes, etc., and leave them at a drop-off point within the USF&G Building. Then, once a month, DNRC Public Information Officer Dan Bushnell delivers the only slightly used paper to local elementary schools to use for art projects, as well as posters and banners for the kids. "The teachers like it because they have big sheets of paper to use for their projects, the schools like it because it's free, and we like it because we don't have to deal with recycling or handling the paper," Bushnell explained.

And DNRC doesn't stop at just paper products. DNRC has loaned a number of used computers to schools throughout the state. Most recently, the Information Technology (IT) Bureau of DNRC loaned 25 used and outdated (by state standards) computers to the elementary school in Stevensville. "Because they're state property, we can't just give the computers away. But, in most cases, the computers are better than what the school can afford. And, it's good for the agency," explained DNRC IT Bureau Chief, Jack Zanto.

During a fiscal year, DNRC consumes great quantities of other products, including batteries and printer cartridges. However, Levitan is quick to point out that the agency is conscientious about the products it uses that are reusable or recyclable, depending on the nature of the product. For example, large quantities of batteries are used by the field folks during the field and fire seasons for portable equipment like hand held radios and global positioning systems (GPS) units. Also, printer cartridges for all the printers the agency has located in all its offices. Each has a printer cartridge. Although not all are reusable or recyclable, those that are, can and should be recycled.

"As a state agency, we should be making every effort to adhere to the 3-R policy as closely as we can," Levitan explained. "Not only does it save money and time, but it's the right thing to do, especially for an agency with 'conservation' in its title."

For more information about recycling office products, batteries or printer cartridges, or starting a recycling program at your office, contact Levitan at 406-444-1271.

Pounds of Paper Products Collected By Montana State Agencies During 2003

(from the FY03 State of Montana Recycling Annual Report)

Total Computer Paper	3,779
Total Cardboard	55,845
Total Newspaper	76,740
Total Office Paper	543,874
Grand Total	680,238

Other Products Recycled in 2003 (in pounds)

Phone Books	6,125
Magazines	24,294
Aluminum Cans	1,039
Scrap Metal	6,900
Toner Cartridges	182
Grand Total	38,540

DNRC SPONSORED SUMMER NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS

Looking for some educational, but fun activities for those teenagers at home this coming summer? DNRC hosts camps each summer for learning about wildlife, range, geology, forestry, soils, and water, while you enjoy the world's most spectacular outdoor classroom, *Montana!* The Montana Youth Range Camp, Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp, Montana Envirothon, and Montana Range Days are four youth programs dedicated to educating Montana's future resource managers and users. Dates, locations, costs, and camp applications are available on the web at: www.montanarangedays.com or www.montanaenvirothon.org.



MONTANA NATURAL RESOURCES YOUTH CAMP was established in 1987 to introduce Montana's high-school-age youth to a variety of natural resources found in our state. The board of directors is made up of representatives of state and federal agencies, resource industries, agricultural producers, and private citizens. The goal is to teach campers how to think, rather than what to think, by offering an integrated program that presents the "big" natural resource picture. The one-week resident camp is held at Lubrecht Experimental Forest east of Missoula and is open to youth entering grades 10-12. The cost of registration is \$175. A \$100 scholarship is provided by camp sponsors, so campers are responsible for only \$75. Contact Peter Kolb at 406-243-4705.

MONTANA ENVIROTHON provides an educational opportunity for team competition. This event is open to students statewide in grades 9-12. The two-day event combines instruction and problem solving that tests the individual, as well as the team. Students are tested in five



MONTANA YOUTH RANGE CAMP is a five-day program for Montana youth ages 12-18. The camp provides an excellent opportunity for youth of varying backgrounds to become more aware of the value and potential of Montana's largest resource-rangeland. A well-organized, balanced, and educational range program is provided in a field workshop environment. Evening programs and activities allow the campers the opportunity to get to know each other and form lasting friendships. The cost is \$100, which covers food, lodging, and materials for the week.



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Camps . . . continued from page 8

www.dnrc.state.mt.us/camps.html, and natural resource categories (forestry, soils, aquatics, range, and wildlife), and each team is required to develop a solution to a hypothetical resource problem based on a local resource issue. Teams compete to represent Montana at the National Envirothon. Members of the first place state team win a \$500 college scholarship, while the team earning the most testing points wins a \$300 college scholarship. The Envirothon will be held in Lewistown on April 25-26, 2005; the cost of team registration is \$50. Contact Shonny Nordlund at 406-538-7401 extension 101.



The Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARDD) of DNRC is a co-sponsor of all of these events. For more information regarding any of the above camps, contact Ross Campbell, DNRC Resource Specialist at 406-444-6852, or rcampbell@mt.gov



MONTANA RANGE DAYS is an annual event that celebrates the importance of rangelands in Montana. In 2005, Range Days will be held in Livingston. This three-day competition welcomes people of all ages, providing fun for the entire family. The event rotates across the state every two years. The competition is separated by divisions: Buckaroos (4-8 years old), Super Starters (9-11 years old), Wranglers (12-13 years old), Youth (14-19 years old and have not graduated from high school) and Adult, Open Adult and Rancher Division (competition optional). A Management Tour Group competition is also provided. For more information, logon to www.montanarangedays.com.





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By using mostly in-shop labor and parts from the Federal Excess Property Program, the new helicopter cost about \$266,000, a far cry from the \$3.5 million price tag these helicopters normally carry.

Even though the 2004 fire season was relatively slow, the new helicopter has already been put to good use, flying over 50-hours on 12 incidents across the state. Brenton said that this helicopter is the new template for DNRC's fleet. "The plan now is to bring the other Huey's in the fleet up to the same level."

Persons with disabilities who need an alternative, accessible format of this document should contact DNRC at the address above. Phone 406 444-2074 or fax 406 444-2684

